

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

URGENT INFORMATION

April 30, 1970

~~SECRET/URBRA~~

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Reported Kosygin Letter to Wilson on the Middle East

According to a Cairo broadcast, Kosygin has sent an "urgent" letter to Prime Minister Wilson accusing Israel of "spreading war hysteria and attempting to involve the big states in the Middle East dispute".

We have no confirmation of this as yet, but Cairo reports the letter will be handed over in London tonight (April 30). It is further reported that the message categorically denies Israel's "allegations" (of Soviet involvement in flying combat patrols).

If there is a new Kosygin letter, it is possible that we may also receive one, which presumably would refute the statements by Ziegler and McCloskey and accuse us of encouraging Israeli "hysteria". At the same time, the Soviets, aware of a publicized reconsideration of our position, ordered by the President, will seek by what they say to head off any new decision on the Phantoms.

MORI/CDF per C03317322

There are probably many in Moscow speculating about what our action in Cambodia means for other areas. If the Israelis have, in fact, exaggerated the Soviet role in combat flying, the Soviets may read our confirmation of the reports as an effort to justify a generally tougher stand not only in Southeast Asia but in the Middle East as well. Of course, it will depend on our further actions whether we can reap any benefit from this.

(Incidentally, even if we conclude that the Israelis exaggerated the Soviet role, I hope that we would still say and do nothing that seemed to condone the Soviet movement into Egypt.

~~SECRET/UMBRA~~